

Army Industrial College
Washington, D. C.

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SOME ASPECTS OF

the

LABOR PROBLEM

During the World War.

(Resume of remarks by Mr. Samuel J.
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of Labor; formerly on Advisory Board,
Council of National Defense.)

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LABOR PROBLEM

1. At a meeting of the responsible officers of the American Federation of Labor, held March 12, 1917, a declaration was unanimously adopted that American Labor would stand 100% in making and giving services anywhere and under any circumstances to make a supreme sacrifice to maintain the Freedom, independence and the honor of the United States of America.
2. Labor, on the whole, made good its pledge during the war.
3. There was less cause for and less complaint of discrimination in the Selective Draft Law and the administration of it than any law that has come under my observation.
4. In order to gain the uninterrupted production of essential works, such as erection of garrisons, camps, etc., a fair ruling was established, a working basis, etc.; attention being devoted to maintaining the morale as well as physical condition of the men engaged in industry.
5. Hours of labor should not be increased except in extreme cases of emergency.
6. There are two things which contributed more than any other to the spirit of American Labor for the war - one was the Seaman's Act, and the other, the Clayton Act. These two measures inspired the men of our Republic to respond to the call for duty.
7. If we were international in spirit, it would give us the opportunity to participate in international affairs, and with the American spirit and principles we could cooperate and help to the fullest possible extent, but if there be a group of people of other nations who undertake to formulate standards of conduct by which we are supposed to be commanded, then the American Labor movement will stand alone and independent.
8. It is a matter of deep regret to all labor leaders that American Federation of Labor is not a member of the International Federation of Trade Unions, with headquarters at Amsterdam, Holland, but we cannot be members of that movement without the surrender of our own independent course.

- 9. I am against war, but not for "peace at any price".
- 10. Speaking of the Japanese question - the two races cannot affiliate. Wherever the Japanese are in large numbers, white men cannot live and thrive. The policy of the government has been outlined in immigration laws. We determine who shall come into our country. The action of the Congress of the United States in meeting the threat of Japan will have done more to call that bluff than anything since the time President Roosevelt sent the American Navy around the world. America is going to determine her own course as far as it rests as to who shall or shall not enter.

It is a profitable study - to know and to learn the anti-foreign legislation, edicts and proclamations of the Japanese. They have more alien land laws than California ever has had enacted.

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Q. What do you think the Government could or should do in the beginning of a war to prevent a rise in prices of labor's food, shelter, clothing, etc., which would prevent demands on the part of labor for increased wages to meet the cost of living - sometimes referred to as a "vicious" circle?

A. If there were a "vicious" circle, where is the harm? There is none. People who would not pay for freedom, and pay the highest price, are undoubtedly undeserving to enjoy same.

Q. Then you regard the rise in prices of commodities and wages as inevitable in time of war?

A. Not necessarily, but one of the results which frequently occurs. The trouble is that we too often try to regulate everybody by certain codes, laws, etc., which some of us try to lay down.

"It is something not yet understood - how perfectly safe Freedom is." When the time comes, if ever it does, the people of the United State will respond regardless of the cost.